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Pulpit Preaching

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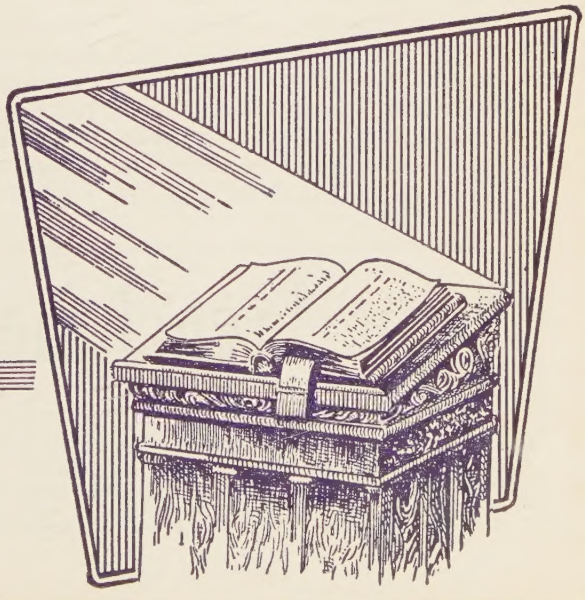

A PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL FOR MINISTERS

Editorial Comments

This month's issue centers in the Easter emphases. "Day of Gladness" brings together several messages suggestive of the meanings of Christ's victory. "The Invincible Surmise" concerns the Christian gospel of death and immortality.

Next month's themes will be "The Christian Way" and "Sermons That Sparkle."

—o—

Books For Pulpit Preaching

Two new books by long-time friends and contributors of PULPIT PREACHING have been recently published. *Sermons on the Psalms* by Harold A. Bosley, pastor of Evanston's First Methodist Church, is a brilliant and helpful series of twenty sermons which show an appreciation of the Psalmist's mood and message and relates these to the permanent concerns of man. (Harper, 208 p.p., $3)

Heaven and Hell by John Sutherland Bonnell carries the sub-title, "What Can You Believe About Them?" Written for a generation which has obscured the biblical concepts of heaven and hell by indifference or misunderstanding, the book offers those bases upon which a Christian can affirm his faith in life and death, eternal life, and the resurrection of Christ. (Abingdon, 66 pp., $1)

The Young Church in Action, a translation of the book of the Acts by J. B. Phillips, is appealing as a companion for devotional reading and as a source for study. Written with simple eloquence and scholarly acumen, this translation gives new insights to familiar pages and will furnish many an illumination to important texts. (Macmillan, 103 pp., $2.50)

The Making of the Sermon by Robert J. McCracken is a distinctive, instructive and inspiring volume on the craft and content of the sermon. Within the scope of 100 pages are highlighted with remarkable and concise clarity the preparatory steps, the varied op-

Continued on page 15

Worth Quoting

One criticism directed not unfairly again a great deal of contemporary preaching that though relevant and timely in its wa and sometimes well-expressed and well-d livered, little actually comes of it. In vie of the thousands upon thousands of sermo preached in the United States on any Su day, it is disconcerting to think how, wh Monday comes, life goes on its way pret much as before. If we take the situation d scribed in the Book of Acts when the Apo tles preached the difference could not more pronounced. The thing that is lackir is the dynamism of the Gospel. The troub with much preaching is that it fails eith to kindle the mind or to energize the wi It seldoms disturbs the conscience or stirs t heart. As we compose our Sunday discours we need to keep reminding ourselves th moralistic exhortation is not enough, an more than intellectual authoritativeness enough. The revival of biblical theology, s widespread in our time, if it avoids th scholastic tendency, keeps close to the nee of men and society and to the heart of th Gospel, should result in dynamic preaching.

Robert J. McCracken in *The Makin of the Sermon* (Harper)

* * * *

The personal nature of God is not som thing we believe because we are persons. W do not create God in our image. We kno God is a person because he has shown him self to us as a person, in his Book and i personal experience. The initiative for under standing what God is like comes from Go himself rather than from us. He wants u to know him.

As a matter of fact, our understandin of human personality comes from the "per sonality" of God rather than from our per sonalities. We have a wrong idea of personali ty. "Personality always wins the day," say Willy Loman in *The Death of a Salesman* He wanted his sons to acquire a winnin

Continued on page 16

Pulpit Preaching

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ARMIN C. OLDSEN
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JOHN SUTHERLAND BONNELL
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THEODORE P. FERRIS

ing Forever

ARMIN C. OLDSEN, Saint Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, Lakewood, Ohio

Whosoever liveth and believeth in me ll never die. John 11:26.

e pastor of a large congregation was aring his Easter sermon. He had done any times before and always with a deal of delight. Since early childhood ad been acquainted with the story of irst Easter. As he in imagination gazed more at the scene of the angel at the y tomb—the picture was the one he een as a boy—it suddenly became alive took on new meaning. Slowly he said nself, "Christ is alive." He said it again, and over, "Christ is alive. Christ is !" Later he told what happened to him g those blessed moments. "At first it ed strange and hardly true that Christ d be living," he said, "but at last it upon me as a burst of sudden glory. med like a thrilling discovery. I thought ll along I had believed it, but not until moment did I feel sure of it. Then I 'My people shall know it; I shall preach it again and again until they believe I do.' "

s easy to observe Easter in an enthusias- nd superficial way, so that the true ge of Easter does not get through to ul. God help us that we, like the pastor ring his Easter sermon, may catch the ng joy of the angel's message at the y tomb of Christ, "The Lord is risen." help us rightly to understand and to ace that supreme truth set forth by t in His comforting assurance to ha at the death of Lazarus, "I am the rrection, and the Life: he that beliveth , though he were dead, yet shall he live: whosoever liveth and believeth in Me never die." It is our promise from God elf that we shall Live Forever.

ish it were possible to recapture the of the announcement when it was first in a sad and sorrowful world, "The is risen!" It wasn't just a simple state- of fact. It was like the explosion of a on a quiet summer evening. It was brilliant flash of lightning across a sky. It was like an unexpected declaration of peace after an exhausting war. "The Lord is risen!" I can't put into it all the feeling and excitement with which it was spoken on the first Easter; and none of us can appreciate it as did those who first heard it. But even in our sad and sorrowful world we can reclaim the true joy and the blessed assurance of the first Easter. This may yet be the most important day of your life!

DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

Easter is not just another holiday set aside for family dinners, colored eggs, a grand fashion parade, and an annual visit to the church. Easter is not simply a day when we remember in passing an amazing miracle that took place 1900 years ago, as we would note for a moment a great event in history. Easter is not a day of wishful thinking about a future event, our resurrection from the dead. Easter is above all the special remembrance of an actual reality, the fact that Christ rose from the dead and of His blessed promise that whosoever lives and believes in Him shall never die.

We have a way of enshrining great spiritual festivals with so many observances of secondary importance that the real purpose of the celebration is almost lost. The story is told of a missionary who, after a furlough in the land of his birth, returned to the members of his flock in some remote corner of the earth. He brought a gift for them: a beautiful sun dial. They accepted it with elaborate thanks and then . . . promptly built a roof over it. What good is a sun dial if there is a roof over it? Here we are on the day set aside for remembrance of Christ's resurrection from the dead and of the fact that those who live and believe in Him shall never die—and how we need that remembrance—and we are inclined to give more serious thought to other matters: a new hat, a dinner, the Sunday newspaper, a drive in the country, a visit with friends. What good is Easter if it does not strengthen our faith in our immortality in Christ?

Let's return for a moment to the first Easter. Christ was dead. In the hearts of

His friends and of His enemies there was no doubt about it. He had died on the cross on Friday, two days earlier, and His partly embalmed body had been lying in a tomb not far from the place of crucifixion. All the bright hopes and wonderful visions of the future enjoyed by those who had been His followers had been buried, too. His disciples were like frightened and bewildered sheep helplessly bleating for the shepherd—and the shepherd was gone! The future held no hope and the past was a painful memory. How the bride will cherish her wedding gown! But if her fiance died the day before the wedding, the gown becomes a poignant reminder of plans a bleeding heart would like to forget. The bride of Christ, His followers, were all the more disconsolate as they remembered the happy hours spent in the mountains and on the seashore with Christ, and the visions of glory of the kingdom of God that He was building. They had followed with high enthusiasm. Now it all seemed like a long trip down a dead-end street.

GRIEF AND JOY

Early Sunday morning, as the first faint streaks of dawn were beginning to silver and blush the eastern sky beyond the hills of Jerusalem, several women hurried from the slumbering city. They took the path through the valley of the Kidron to the tomb where their thoughts had been lying since late Friday afternoon. Sleepless and restless with grief, they were on their way to complete the proper burial of their Lord. In their arms they carried the necessary ointments and spices; in their hearts they carried a sorrow as heavy as a tombstone. What did they care whether or not the sun would shine that day. What did they care about the gay colors of a spring in Palestine. What did they care about the morning chirping of the birds. Then it happened! At the tomb they heard the startling and unbelievable announcement of an angel of God, "The Lord is risen." In bewilderment they hurried back to the city; but before they could reach it, Christ Himself appeared to them. Then they knew without a doubt, Christ was alive. According to the Sacred Record, the risen Christ showed Himself at least eleven times during the next forty days, on one occasion to more than five hundred. There was no doubt in the minds of those who saw Him that Christ was alive.

That is how the thrilling message started on its way. "The Lord is risen." It became the favorite theme of the preaching apostles. It was heard in Jerusalem by visitors from many lands. It was carried to Corinth and Ephesus and Rome. It was told to jailers and prisoners, to rulers and soldiers, to masters and servants. It was taken up by succeeding generations. It is still on its way today as it resounds throughout the world, "The Lord is risen."

But much of the thrill seems to have gone out of it. "Happy Easter" is our morning wish, but we largely overlook that Christ is risen. We still confess our faith in the Creed, "The third day Christ rose from the dead;" but we don't hear a bomb explode and we don't see the lightning flash. We confess as so, "I believe in . . . the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting," but we do not always speak it with ringing conviction and it doesn't seem very exciting.

CHRIST'S PROMISE

We may never be able fully to experience the sudden and sharp change that swept over the disciples as they moved from grief to joy, from fear to courage, from despair to confidence, and from doubt to certainty, for we know that Good Friday is always followed by Easter. However, Christ's promise to us is still the most important news in all the world, "Because I live, ye shall live also. Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

A mature person faces realities. He is not blind to any of the facts of life, and certainly not to the inevitability of the end of life. He recognizes without morbid emotionalism that he shall finally die. The inescapable knowledge that life must end has always distressed men. From earliest times they were haunted by the impending and awful finality of death. Their hearts cried out for life that was unending. The age-old question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" remained a perplexing question, except for those who found an answer in faith. Then came the Redeemer. He assumed a human body. His enemies killed Him. His friends put Him into a grave. If He had remained there, the question of immortality would have been answered with a terrible finality, "If a man dies, he shall not live again."

A traveler told of witnessing a passion play in Europe many years ago. Especially the closing scene in the play, he vividly remembered. The bodies of Christ and the malefactors had been removed. The crosses were empty. From the cross in the center a white cloth fluttered forlornly in the early evening breeze. Suddenly a question came to him, and he felt that it must have come to many of the other spectators also. What if that were the end? What if that were all of

tory of Christ? How different life would
d how different eternity!

rist had foretold that the grave would
e able to hold Him. He had predicted
in coming to grips with Him, death
d make a fatal mistake. On Easter morn-
His prophecy was fulfilled. If Christ had
ered death for Himself alone, the story
aster would be cruel mockery. He who
cted that He would rise again, and did
omised those who believe in Him, "Be-
I live, ye shall live also." Death is now
ervant of Christ and brings His children

MIRACLE OF GOD

must not try to explain nor completely
derstand what happened on the first
r. No one saw Christ emerge from the
. The resurrection of Christ was not a
al occurrence. It was a miracle of God!
annot understand it; but we can be-
it. There is no room for reasonable ex-
tion; there is no need for scientific
; there is no place for demonstration;
is only foundation for faith. Of course,
an stand with Thomas, if you want to,
ay, "Prove it to me. I won't believe it
I see it." But you'll never find any
ness in Easter in such an attitude, or
asting joy in life. You can make your-
itter and cynical—but remember that
as learned to say, "My Lord and my
' If I believe in God at all, I believe in
les. If I believe that God created me, I
e that He can call me back to life. If
e any trust in God, I'll believe His
.

e disciples insisted that they had seen
sen Christ. The change that took place
ir life demonstrates that they believed
t first their joy, no doubt, was mostly
he fact that their Lord was again alive;
radually an understanding of all that
involved in Christ's resurrection took
f them and they became changed men.
a boldness and a confidence that amazes
ith a zeal that puts us to shame, they
went out to turn the world upside down because their Lord had turned the grave inside out. Courageously they faced danger and persecution, prison and death itself because Christ had promised, "Because I live, ye shall live also." They believed that they would live forever. They believed in the resurrection and in that faith they conquered.

Centuries before, Job lived one of the truly triumphant lives of all times because his confidence was, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, whom I shall see for myself." Some twenty years after Christ's resurrection Paul wrote his splendid fifteenth chapter in his First Epistle to the Corinthians on immortality. If Christ had not risen from the dead, it would have been disproved a dozen times before Paul wrote. Paul staked his life on it. Eternity will show how gloriously he won.

We are not without experiences that support our faith. It has been my privilege to minister frequently at the death-bed of devoted Christian people, including a number of Christian ministers. At no other time or place has my faith in Christ and in the resurrection been more firmly supported. At the end, when death was near, faith and confidence in Christ and in the resurrection glowed. They died confidently because they knew they would live forever.

Faith in eternal life through Christ is not a theological concept that a man accepts and then simply lets it go at that until he is ready to depart this life. Belief in everlasting life in Christ the Savior is dynamic. It exerts a powerful influence also in this life. Often we are inclined to think of immortality as something that begins when life on earth is past. Yet, if we are immortal, we are immortal at this moment. In other words, we ought to live as though we expected to live forever. The message of Easter is, "The Lord is risen!" and "Because He lives, we, too, shall live." There is nothing in all the world that will more effectively relieve our anxieties, lighten our trails, and soften our sorrows. Live confidently in Christ today, in prospect of a blessed eternal tomorrow.

Last Word Is Life

GENE E. BARTLETT, First Baptist Church, Los Angeles, California

me day," said Dwight L. Moody, "you
ead that Dwight L. Moody is dead.
you believe it. I shall then be more
than ever before." It is precisely this
about Jesus Christ that brings us to
h.

But the real significance is even deeper. It is the promise of the restoration of life. It is the promise that death can be turned to victory. It is the promise of renewal and release. How better can we speak of it than in the words of Paul, written to the Philippians, as

Dr. Goodspeed has translated them, "I want to know Him in the power of resurrection." Immediately the most significant truth is brought to the front. It is the power of resurrection which has been revealed. There are so many ways by which men know Christ. Some knew Him because of what He taught. Others knew Him because they had felt the healing of His hands. Others had known Him because He had brought comfort in the hour of sorrow. But none knew Him as deeply as those distracted and scattered disciples who felt the power of His resurrection restoring their hope and confidence and joy.

Our deepest need is not to have the truth of the resurrection proved. No man can do that. It is to have it released that its power can have way in our lives.

PROMISE OF RESTORATION

First of all, here is clearly the promise that the deepest things of your soul can be restored to life. Make no mistake about it, the real confirmation of the resurrection is not in an empty tomb or a stone rolled away; it is in the hearts of men who know beyond doubt that He is living. If men believe in the empty tomb and all the externals, it is only because they have felt the living Christ in their own hearts. Dr. Buttrick gave us an unforgettable phrase when he said, "A memory quickened into a presence." It was the experience of the living Christ which was the heart of this resurrection experience. And it is the heart of it for us today.

Yes, the deepest things of your soul, qualities you had thought long dead can be restored to life. The resurrection is the power that sets us free.

One thing is a restored integrity. How easily we find ourselves surrendering integrity in our world, not by one great act but by a thousand quiet compromises and ten thousand respectable dishonesties. Most of us lose our real integrity somewhat as that sheep, of which Jesus spoke, which must have wandered from the flock. Surely, he came to his lostness not by any intent of wandering away, but only going from one tuft of grass to another, until the final end of it was his lostness, his separation. He needed then to be saved and restored.

Something sobering does happen to men and women who live in the give-and-take of life without some chance to restore their integrity. They become somewhat like the old lady described by Sir William Fyfe. Of her he said that she had only one small defect of character, and that was she was unable to tell right from wrong. It is one of life's darkest hours for any man when he discovers, quite apart from his intent, that he has suffered a progressive death of his integrity. He is bound by his dishonesties and his compromises as really as a man may be bound by his tomb. It is a deep prayer which does not go unheard when a man prays that the power of resurrection may come for his own integrity.

POWER OF THE RESURRECTION

Or some may feel the need for it even more urgently in their trust in God. Do you suppose this is what Jesus meant when He said that we had to become like children to enter into the kingdom? Children have such a manifest trust. It springs from them almost naturally. But as life goes on we grow increasingly reserved, cynical, given to withholding our trust. This is one of the great divides in life. Some live by trust, and others live by fear.

A friend of mine in Europe was a pastor in Denmark when the Nazis came in. It brought about a complete change in his life as he learned the ways of underground resistance. It was the same pastor, the same city, the same congregation, but his way of life was completely different for one reason. He lived under hostility instead of security. It is a moving experience to hear him tell what it meant when at long last he could walk the streets in confidence again, giving up the ways of deception and subterfuge.

But there are some of us who live as though we are in underground resistance to the very government of the world itself. We do not walk freely. We have lost our capacity to trust. Suspicion is our teacher. But it is a way that leads to the death of the deepest things of your soul. What could it mean if the power of resurrection could bring you out of that fear into trust, and out of that suspicion into security!

We would not do justice to this without adding, moreover, that some will need this power of resurrection in their own moral health. Inevitably being given to sinful ways we must, surely, come to the place that we pray that God will make us clean again. This is the very heart of the hope of this hour. No man lives in our kind of world, surrounded by our kind of temptations without having a personal stake in the promise that God is both able and just to forgive us and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness. It must have been a resurrection for that woman who one day knelt before the Master, humiliated by her sin, to hear the words, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." It

be so for some here today by the power surrection.

most any place you touch life it needs restored. It does not move by its own entum. Every day is a tug of war be- n death and life. Death says, weariness fatigue; Life says, rest and restoration. h says, hunger and weakness; Life says, ishment and restoration. Death says, iness; Life says, love. Death says, sin; says, forgiveness. Death says, fear; Life faith. And the struggle goes on daily, ing the power of resurrection. The deep- hings of your soul can be restored by power.

LIFE OR DEATH

t there is a second and deep contem- ry meaning to this resurrection truth. It promise of a power to restore the sav- elationships of life. We have most often ght of the power of resurrection in re- to the individual soul. Yet, there is ual truth that his faith restores person- ationships, too, and it speaks directly to eed today.

e real question to be faced on Easter ay by some of us is whether our lives ounting on the side of life or of death. ou stand for hatred or for love? Are spreading prejudice or reconciliation? ou building understanding or spreading nderstanding? Do you carry healing or ? Are you willing the resurrection of life lding to the destruction of life by your ence? Belief in the resurrection, in the ry of life over death, confronts every with a personal decision. Which side your life follow in its influence?

1947 a young man in the West picked copy of *Life* magazine and for the first read the story of Albert Schweitzer. He was so impressed by it that he contacted the officials who could arrange a trip to Africa to see this great man. There in the jungle hospital that man made his own surrender to Christ and came back with a new sense of his own commission. His influence henceforth would be on the side of life as against death. In December of 1954 there was laid the cornerstone in Haiti, funds of which had come from this man's personal funds and other monies that he had raised. He is now the head doctor in that hospital. The interesting thing is that he is William L. Mellon of the famous Pittsburgh family, holders of such vast wealth. His life could have been so different had he chosen. But you see the power of resurrection is at work even in our time when so many things seem to point to the death of our society. It can reach from Africa around the world, still claiming young men who say, "This claims me!"

I for one believe that this is one of the ways by which the power of resurrection works in a critical hour of history. God has His own ways of restoring life and surely He will do it not only for persons but for the very society, of which we are a part, if we will make the decision to let our lives be channels of life instead of instruments of death.

What an overflowing prayer it was that Paul wrote to the Philippians, "I want to know Him in the power of resurrection." Anyone who has seen the restoration of life to the deepest things of his soul or who has offered his strength that he might help restore life to our time will know Christ in the deepest possible way. We have His word for it, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Remembering Him we know beyond the shadow of a doubt that the last word belongs to life.

All-Conquering Christ

N SUTHERLAND BONNELL, Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, N. Y.

me years ago, a pessimistic American sopher declared that it seems impossible nger to believe in the permanent great- of man or to give life a meaning that t be annulled by death. We are moving, id, into an age of spiritual exhaustion lespondency like that into which Christ

is, at least, is sure. His description of the opening decades of the Christian accurate. Disillusionment and skeptic- cynicism and despair were universal. found expression even on tombstones. One can still read on tablets rescued from ancient Roman graveyards words such as these: "I was, I am not, I do not care."

For multitudes of people, night was at hand and there was not even a star in the sky.

Into this world of hopelessness and senile despair, of sensuality and shame, came Jesus Christ with His revelation of God's infinite love for man. And from that day He hung on the Cross and rose triumphant over death and the grave there was hope.

Hope came to birth in the blackest hour in

human history. It looked like the complete triumph of evil. It seemed that hate had defeated love; that wrong had worsted right; that injustice had finally triumphed.

The disciples themselves shared this feeling. For these eleven men, the world had come to an end. The stars were blotted out of the sky. Night descended on their souls. They had expected that their Master would be acclaimed Messiah. Instead, they saw Him nailed to a cross, and every indignity, every dishonor, every torture that the twisted brains of cruel men could devise was visited upon Him. The mood of the disciples is reflected in the words which John Masefield puts on the lips of Longinus, the Roman Centurion, as he talks to Pilate's wife:

> He was a fine young fellow, my lady, not past the middle age. And he was all alone and defied all the Jews and all the Romans, and when we had done with him he was a poor broken-down thing, dead on the cross."

This was the end of their dream: "A poor broken-down thing, dead on the cross." So deep and dark was the tragedy, that in it there appeared no purpose and beyond it no hope.

BREAK OF DAY

Then came the Resurrection of Jesus Christ like the breaking of the day after a night of terror and storm.

The Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ became a turning point in human history. Had the Cross written "finis" to the career of our Lord that would have been the end of all idealism. There would have been no Christian Church, no glorious Easter anthems, no triumphant hope of the victory of life over death. But Easter morning transformed these helpless, empty-hearted, broken men so that they moved with confidence in a new world.

The miracle of the personal transformation of the disciples is second only to the miracle of the Resurrection, for these broken reeds became pillars of iron; these pygmies became giants and these cowardly men now rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer and die in the service of their crucified but risen Master.

So the Easter message brings hope in these fear-ridden and bewildering times.

I talked once with one of the foremost professional men of this nation. He has been associated with atomic research in one of our best-known American universities. His outlook on the future was almost wholly darkened by pessimism. "If I knew less about the realities of the present situatio he said, "I might see some hope for ma kind. As it is, I see little or none."

As we continued to talk, the explanati of his hopelessness was revealed. He st clung to the old-fashioned, materialis teaching that human life is without a cau and without a goal; that man is an irrespo sible particle of matter engulfed in purpo less forces that will work his doom. I mu confess that if I shared his philosophy, should perforce share his gloom. And y withal he expressed a wistful hunger f hope and for God.

CRISIS OF OUR TIME

Leading scientists and educators are te ing us that the course of human history h reached a crisis in our time. One reason w so many people are plunged into fear or di illusionment is because the foundation which they have built their hopes for a peac ful world is shattered. They had made a g of science. They had begun to believe th the more science we had the better would t world become. They had utter confidence the perfectability of man by material mear And now that this hope has disappeare they have no alternative.

We must not rest our security on materi things alone, in the confidence which East brings that force has not the last word God's universe and that goodwill, brother ness, and the spirit of Christ will triumj in the end.

The world to-day stands at the cross-roa and the words of Holy Scripture take on ne and decisive meaning: "I call heaven a earth to record this day against you, that have set before you life and death, blessi and cursing: therefore choose life, that bo thou and thy children shall live."

Man has within his grasp power to destr the civilization which for six thousand yea he has been building on this planet. If ho ever, he uses the new powers that scien has conferred upon him for constructi ends, within the next half century he m bring in the golden age in which even t deserts will rejoice and blossom as the ros and the burden will be lifted from the bac of toilers everywhere.

The dawn of Easter proclaims anew i message of the triumph of the spiritual ov the material, of love over hate, of life ov death. It banishes fear, dissolves our doub and re-establishes confidence that the w of God will triumph. So Easter comes aga as the promise and the prophecy of that gl day when the kingdoms of this world sh

me the kingdoms of our Lord and His st, and He shall reign forever and ever, King of kings, and Lord of lords; Conqueror of death, Lord of life, alive forever more!

e Christ of Power

/ILLIAM E. PHIFER, JR., Central Presbyterian Church, Kansas City, Missouri

It is no weak Christ you have to do th, but a Christ of power. II Corinth-ns 13:3 (Moffatt)

ne Christ of the gospels is a magnificent re. Whenever the writers of the New ament thought of him instinctively they ed their heads in reverence and awe be- the stupendous fact that in this man s, God had come into the stream of an affairs. He was no midget among In everything he did he was the direct esentative of the Almighty power that a universe and those who knew him were captivated by the majesty of his on. Thomas Guthrie was once a student ne Sorbonne in Paris.

n one occasion, in a chemistry lecture, professor produced a Damascus blade. rder to give force to that which he was aining to the students the professor ask- s assistant, an unusually strong man, to e a bar of iron with this Damascus d. The assistant swung the blade around ead and with all the force of his mighty les brought it down upon the iron bar. would have expected the fine steel of the e to shiver like glass before the impact ch a blow, but instead the blade buried in the iron, quivering, but uninjured. lecturer offered it as his opinion that e world famous swords owed their re- kable temper to the fact that the iron which they were made was smelted by charcoal of a thorn bush that grew in lesert. Whether we accept that as the t of the blade or not, here in a figure r Christ. Powerful yet gentle, mighty e all that men may produce, Jesus stands eme in the manifestations of his authori-

e do not always allow it to be true to- much to the detriment of our modern ty. We have whittled this man down we have almost made of him an ef- nate creature, leaving much to be de- d in the fashioning of his personal life. hink of him as a gracious person who generously gave himself for other peo- who taught those of his generation with sight beyond his own day but who was y simple soul, ultimately, and completely ted to speak to the sophistication of our day. Oftentimes we go even so far as to think that in all likelihood he threw away his life in a quixotic enterprise that was doomed to failure from the start. Consequently we have a deep feeling of pity welling up inside our hearts that the man should have been so shamefully treated. We wish we could have been there to defend him; we would have driven his enemies aside and shielded him for the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune that besieged him. How little we understand the man! How mistaken are our views of that which real powers is!

ART OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

For make no mistake, here was a man more powerful than all others of all time in the art of righteousness. To Jesus the temptations of life were fires through which he walked untouched by the severity of their flames. He was adept in following after the things that made the world better and shunning the things that sin made possible. He had a goal in his experience and he let nothing cast a shadow over the light that he was determined to make plain to all men. He did not have the mistaken idea that God would eventually right the wrongs of this world, therefore he need do nothing but wait for the dawn of a new day. He gave himself unstintingly to the practice of those virtues that would point the way of a new order and that would show men the value of those things that are unseen but forever real. The power that he manifested was one that was able to rout all of the attacks of the devil by a frontal assault upon the bastions of evil. In short, Jesus did not just ask God to do something about the evil that he found in the world; he personally showed forth his power in doing something about it himself.

One recalls the familiar story of the little girl who prayed one night, "O God, I ask you to be sure to not let any beautiful birds get caught in Jim Jones' traps. Jim is a nice boy but sometimes he does naughty things and the traps are cruel to the birds. God, I am counting on you not to let any birds get caught in those traps. Thank you for doing this for me. Amen." Her mother overheard the prayer and asked the little girl how she could be so sure that no birds would be caught, and that God would keep them away. The little girl answered, "I know

God will do it because he helped me bust the traps this afternoon." Therein was the secret of the power that Jesus had for righteousness. He was not willing to leave it all to some future housecleaning time, but he went himself with a scourge of cords into all the temples of iniquity and bore his witness to the power of goodness. To be sure he eventually lost his life for so doing, but the power that he manifested was loosed into the stream of human affairs and for twenty centuries has stood as a monument to what we could do if we followed in his train. The schoolmen of the Middle Ages had many learned debates on the question whether Jesus was able not to sin, or not able to sin. But it doesn't make a great deal of difference when we get down to the practical aspects of the matter. This much we know, none other has ever manifested his kind of power in the making of world for righteousness.

DEPENDENCE ON CHRIST

But some may complain that we cannot be like Jesus. After all, our theology proclaims him to be set apart from all men, and lifted up in his deity to a plain upon which we are not able to stand. To be sure there is truth in the assertion but it is not the whole truth. The glory of our Christian faith is that we are not without the same type of power that he had, for he promised that he would witness to the truth that he proclaimed by coming into the lives of each one of us who wanted him to be with us. It is not common sense to wish for a world in which there is no pain or hardship or suffering unless we are willing to do battle with these things. But assuredly it is not good common sense to try to do battle with them in our own strength alone. Our powers are insufficient to the tasks by which we are surrounded and unless we can count on him we shall not be able to measure up.

There are some people who have mixed up their thoughts in regard to these matters. They contend that a good God would make our world a place of peace and rest and free our lives from all anxiety and care. But where did they get the idea that a good God would do that? Nothing that Jesus ever said would remotely suggest that such would be an act of kindness or mercy on the part of a Father God. The very struggles in which we engage are the things that enable us to prevail and to be more than conquerors through him that loved us. You cannot be a conqueror if there is nothing to overcome. For Christmas my youngster received a bicycle. When the weather permits he is going to continue his learning to ride that l cycle. We anticipate that he will likely f off of it several times, perhaps he will brui himself, cut himself, even break a bone b fore he masters the art of riding that bicyc Now which is better, take the bicycle fro him and deprive him of possible future plea ure, or allow him to have the opportunity getting hurt in order that he may acqui the art of riding? As parents that dilemn is placed before us, and I trust we cho wisely in allowing the bicycle to come in his life. I wonder if that is not the same id with which God looks out over his childre Pain and disaster are possible to us, but we are going to be heirs of God there is n other way to achieve the goal. Should we lo the reward because we are afraid of t journey? Evidently God does not think s for he put us here with all the difficulty, a then promised us that the power of Jes should be guaranteed to us.

POWERFUL IN LOVE

Yet further, we note that this Christ ours is one who is powerful in love. Ordinar ly we do not associate the two things t gether, for in our worldly estimate of wh power is we very often think of it as beir synonymous with force and with materi might. But there is a sense in which nothir is more powerful than the force of love, a we do ourselves no favor if we ignore t obvious. Once there was a piece of iron. T axe said, "I can break it," and so it rain blow after blow upon the iron but all th happened was that the axe was blunted a dulled. The wind said, "I can break it," a so it blew a gale all around the iron but not ing happened save that the wind was e hausted and failed. The fire said, "I c break it," and wrapping its brilliant tentacl all about the iron it gradually melted it in two parts. So the power of the softening i fluence of love cannot be denied in the fas ioning of human destiny. Above all othe Jesus has shown us that which love can d and to us has offered the fruits of his sacr fice.

Of course, this sort of living does not fit i with the ideas of the world. Generally, it believed that the best way to get along wit mankind is to keep uppermost in your thin ing the fact that if you do not look out f yourself nobody will. Theodore Roosevelt suggestion of "Walking softly and carrying big stick" is a bit of popular jingoism appli to a national scale, and is one of the thing that has caused us so much suffering in a the generations that men have pursued ha

ss. We have always thought "Me first" consequently have frequently found that orks out "Me last." Jesus was not just ing for an idle conversation when he de- d that the last shall be first and the shall be last. It is a law of nature that s itself out in everyday affairs. We do believe it very strongly and selfishness ll the major enterprise of our living, but ternal facts still gleam above us.

A. Studdert-Kennedy was a chaplain e First World War. Among his many htful writings he tells of standing one beside a giant of a man, a sergeant who an especial friend of his. On the other there was a chap who had lost his nerve to the incessant shelling by the enemy . He was saying over and over aloud, od, keep me safe! . . . O God save me." sergeant was too busy trying to figure ow he would save his men to stop for ers at the moment and all that could eard from him was the barking of or- But the cries of this frightened chap beginning to get on his nerves. Finally ing to the chaplain he said, "That chap's g his prayers, isn't he, sir?" To, which edy replied, "No he isn't, sergeant; s not prayer, it's wind." To which Ken- adds in his book, "Now that may sound , but it's true. They were not prayers, whinings of his. Why? Because there none of Christ's spirit in them. He had one thought in his mind; his own skin. s purely selfish prayer and selfish pray- really not prayer at all." True Christ- y can never be something that makes us et; it must make us remember and do thing about a situation. There are mom- when the sky is darkened, when the s whine about our defenseless heads, and annot help wondering whether the jour- is worth what it costs. But then we need ractice the art of the power of love and ntrating our attention upon other peo- e shall discover that we ourselves have d an answer to our problem.

CHALLENGE OF FAITH

rhaps that is one reason why the rin tablet" type of religion ultimately ot succeed in making much of modern s. So much of the refrain that we hear some pulpits and through the immense- opular writings of some ministers is lly almost pagan. It is woven complete- the idea that if you think good thoughts can get rid of your pain and make a on dollars for yourself. It is, in short, a letely selfish ideal which passes as the Christian doctrine. Certainly it was not the way that Jesus taught us that men ought to live. I cannot find in the gospels a counsel of taking deep breaths and repeating to one- self, "God loves me," a hundred times, or some other similar formulae. Rather do I hear him saying, "Whosoever would come after me must take up his cross daily, deny himself, and follow me." There is no promise that it will be easy or rewarding or profita- ble, from a worldly standpoint. Just a chal- lenge to the deep power that every man has latent within his life, if he is willing to reach deep down and bring it to the surface.

The power of love that Jesus has exerted across the centuries was born of his own sacrifice, and there is no other way that it may be made manifest. So long as he thought only of himself just so long would he have been condemned to a forgotten grave, but in the power of extending himself into the lives of others, and dying on a cross for the sake of others he made the world a better place in which to live, and he showed men the truth of the paradox that whosoever would be strong must first learn to become weak.

Yet again, this powerful Christ manifests himself in hope. No matter how ideal we know unselfishness to be, how realistically it is borne in upon us that we must live for others, no matter how truly we recognize the opportunities of service to others, there is a time when we must think of ourselves. If no other reason is suggested, then merely be- cause the pains and hardships of the moment will not let us forget. . . .

> the sensuous frame
> Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust;
> And time, a maniac scattering dust,
> And life, a fury slinging flame.

We cannot help wondering what the future is like and what there may be for us beyond that bend in the road that we call tomorrow, which effectively shuts away from us all accurate knowledge of the future. Will we be happier tomorrow, or will some untoward fate rob us even of that which now we have? Naturally, we are sobered by such questions and such thoughts, and we are bound to seek for answers. No man can completely forget himself, and even Jesus counselled that a man should have a certain amount of self love. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy- self." The only inference possible is that we must love ourselves in order to live up adequately to the expectation that God has for us. In that love for self, there sometimes intrudes a bit of worry and anxiety and

fear for the future. And we do not get rid of such things simply by saying "Be gone, you bad thoughts!" We have to have a substitute or we won't lose them.

SYMBOL OF HOPE

Have you ever seen a picture by Gabriel Max called, The Greeting? A maiden, doomed to death because of her devotion to Christ, stands in a Roman arena. On her left a group of lions sated with flesh lie unconcerned; on her right a ravenous beast, with head bent and eyes aflame, is just issuing from its cage. The galleries are all filled with expectant people. At the feet of the young martyr a rose has fallen from above. She stands with a hand upon a pillar and her eyes, soon to be closed forever on earthly scenes, lifted toward the balcony. She is searching gratefully for the hand that has dropped this token of kindness at her feet. You and I are in a similar situation. There are dangers all round us, and there are many time when only unfriendly faces stare back at us from the world. Then looking down we find a rose at our feet. We lift grateful hearts above for we know from whence has come this symbol of our hope. We know in whom we have believed and we are persuaded that he is able to keep that which we have committed to him against that day.

In order to make this power effective in our living we must understand and accept the type of power that it is. God does not always work things out the way that we desire them, nor does he seem to be in any hurry whatsoever to get them done. In order to lay hold upon the hope that he has promised us we must be willing to get a long range viewpoint and abide by the hesitancies that so often make the whole venture appear to be futile. Just so long as we can keep in mind that the impossible is always possible with God we shall be able to find a way through the murky haze that sometimes surrounds us. As men looked at the weary figure that hung on a cross that eventful Friday so long ago they thought it was impossible for any influence or good to radiate from such an abjectly and utterly defeated man. Even his followers did not dare, or care, to remember his name. Grievously he had disappointed them; hopelessly had he allowed the soldiers to nail him to the tree. The future was impossible of producing any good out of such a situation. He was dead and there is nothing more impossible than life out of death.

OUR DECISION

But his tormentors reckoned without God. He who does so is ignorant of the deepest currents of life. We all have to do with this Being who first sent the planets spinning into space and who breathed into us the breath of life. You cannot escape him though you flee down the halls of time and take cover in the solitude of space. He is always there and we cannot be rid of him. Sometimes he reminds us of duty yet undone, of opportunity yet ungrasped, of obligation yet unmet. Then, in those moments when the sun has ceased to shine he reminds us that whatever may seem to be the impossibilities of tomorrow there is an answer to be found in the faithfulness of a man's devotion. God can yet redeem his people if they are willing to put their trust in him. The salvation of the world depends upon how much the world wants salvation. Hope belongs to each one of us because of the powerful Christ who is our brother. But whether or not we will accept the companionship that he holds out to us is a decision that each of us must make. But the hope is there for those who desire it.

The two pilgrims on their way to Celestial City were given over to doubt and despondency in Doubting Castle. They had been beaten by Giant Despair with a crab-tree cudgel. On Saturday, about midnight, they began to pray and continued in prayer until the break of day. Then Christian, as one half amazed, said, "What a fool am I to lie in this dungeon when I may as well walk at liberty. I have a key in my bosom that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle." Hopeful replied, "That is good news my brother; pluck it out of thy bosom and try." And as he turned the key in the lock the door flew open with ease and Christian and Hopeful came out. Have you been wondering about this Christ of power; whether he could inspire you, uplift you, make you what you ought to be? Pluck the key out of thy bosom and try!

Lessons from an Old Story

THEODORE P. FERRIS, Trinity Church, Boston, Massachusetts

The great stories of the world never grow old. They are something like deep wells that never run dry, and one of the greatest of them is St. Luke's story about the Walk to Emmaus. You remember how it goes. Two friends of Jesus, two young men, were walk-

from Jerusalem to a little town called
maus seven miles away, on the Sunday
r Jesus had been crucified. They were
and they were groping their way
ugh the long shadows of the Cross. As
went along someone drew up from be-
l. It was Jesus, but they did not recognize
He let them talk, and pour out their
bles, and then finally when they had un-
lened their souls, he began to talk to
n. He talked to them about the Scrip-
s, the word of God, the truth, and parti-
rly the truth about suffering. Finally,
n they reached their destination, it was
ard evening and he was going on further,
they asked him to stay with them, and he
t in. During the evening meal he broke
d and gave it to them, and then they
v who he was. And he vanished out of
r sight. They went back to Jerusalem to
the others what had happened to them
were amazed when they got there to find
something very much like it had happen-
o the others who had stayed behind in the

he heart of the story, of course, is the
ence of the risen Christ, and most of the
ons that have ever been preached about
right to that heart. But like all great
ies, this story has its fringe; there is
t around the edge of it. And this time, in-
d of going to the very core of the story
f, I should like to take you around the
ges of that light and let some of it drift
the places where you live. We might call
ssons from an old story.

DISCOVERIES

he first is that the great things in life
n come when we are not looking for
n. Columbus wasn't looking for a new
inent when he set sail from Genoa; he
looking for a new way to an old world.
he stumbled upon a new hemisphere!
abeth Barrett wasn't looking for a hus-
when Robert Browning burst into her
she was looking for the best sort of life
could live as a recluse and semi-invalid.
n, without any preparation and without
expectation on her part or any inten-
there stood Robert Browning, like the
g sun, to change the whole course of her

great many of the discoveries we make
made that way, when we are not look-
for them, and many of the greatest re-
nships in life are made not when we go
with the specific intention to make them,
times grimly determined to do so, but
n we are going along with the daily rou-
tine, doing the best we can to meet the situations that life presents to us. These experiences sweep over us; they come like new ideas, rushing through our minds, unbidden and unexpected. These relationships come up from behind, so to speak. We haven't even been aware of their presence in the distance, when suddenly they overtake us and re-make our lives. The men on the way to Emmaus, you see, weren't looking for Jesus; they had left him behind sealed in a tomb and never expected to see him again, and they were going on with their grief and sorrow. They weren't looking for him, but he was looking for them, and it is worth remembering this other side of life. It doesn't eliminate or cancel out the effort that we must make toward all the great things in life, but it does make the picture of life more complete when you remember that in addition to the effort and the striving that you are making, life keeps coming up to you from behind, and overwhelming you when you least expect it with things that you never dreamed possible, and supplementing your poor little effort and striving with its magnifient gifts.

VISION

The second lesson on the fringe of the story is this: we don't always see the things we are looking at. We have strange blind spots, you know. A man can look at a building and not see its beauty; he can look at a printed page and have not the faintest idea of its meaning; and worst of all, he can look at a person, a human being made with all the craft and skill of the Almighty, and not see any possibilities in him at all. It has often amazed me, having no children of my own, how parents can look at their children and not see them, not see when they are embarrassed, not see when they are in real inner trouble. They look at them every day, but in so many cases they don't see them.

The friends of Jesus, you see, when they walked along toward Emmaus, didn't see him. They were looking right at him, listening to him. Why didn't they see him? There is no answer, of course, that we can give with any certitude. Sometimes people have assumed that they didn't recognize him because his appearance had changed and as the risen Christ he looked different than he had looked as the young carpenter. While there may be something in that, I suspect the real reason is to be found in this inner blindness of ours. They weren't prepared to see him, and we see, by and large, the things we are prepared to see. They weren't looking for him, and we see pretty much what we are looking

for in life, and the things we are not looking for we are not likely to see at all! They had no idea that they would ever see him again; he was dead and buried and, even though they were looking right at him, they didn't see him.

Why do you suppose it is that people today can look at the world they live in, and particularly into the lives of the people they know, and not see the risen Christ? Because they are not looking for him. Some of them are not expecting to find him; they are not prepared to see him. They could stare him right in the face and still not see him. They could see in the life of a person something that was an unmistakable sign and evidence of the fact that he was being indwelt by the Christ-Spirit, and still not take it in. They could look straight at him and not see him because they were not looking for him.

These two lessons, when you put them together, make a kind of paradox, and paradoxes are tantalizing things, but we cannot get through life without them, and it is just as well to recognize them. This is the paradox. The great opportunities don't come when you are looking for them, but you don't see them when they do come unless you are looking for them. It isn't the person who is always on the aggressive end of things, forging his way ahead like a bulldozer, who comes to the great opportunities of life, and yet, granted the fact that the opportunities come only when we are going along our normal life and doing our job as well as we can, nevertheless, if underneath that normal surface of activity there isn't a deep hunger for the things of God, then when they come we don't see them.

PREFACE TO GLORY

Another lesson is this: disappointment is often the prelude to discovery and suffering is almost always the preface to glory. Disappointment and suffering—I suppose they make up the major part of the minor chord of life. I can't believe that there is anyone who has not been bitterly disappointed, and I am sure that there isn't anybody who in some way hasn't suffered during the course of his lifetime. It is interesting to notice that the greater expectations a person has, the more likely he is to be disappointed, and the more sensitive he is, the more certain it is that he will have a large amount of suffering to endure.

And this disappointment and suffering can be a dead-end in a person's life. I have seen a person so disappointed in the early years of his life that he was completely soured by that disappointment; he has never outgrown it, and his life has never had the resilience that it would have had if it had not been for that disappointment. And I have also seen people who have suffered such blows of one sort or another that they have really never survived them; they have been like a blight upon their lives. But this story shows that there is another side to these things. The disciples, you see, were disappointed, bitterly so; they pinned all their hopes on Jesus. Times were bad, worse than they are now, and finally someone had appeared whom they could think of as a star rising in the East, someone they could count on, and just when he came to the point of realizing their hopes, he was killed. And yet as we look back on the story, there is the fact, isn't there? that at the very time when they were the most bitterly disappointed they made their most startling discovery, and at the time that they thought everything was lost, they found going along with them in a different way, perhaps, or as we might say translated into a different key, their friend and master, Jesus.

Jesus suffered as all men suffer, and he suffered in a way that no other man has suffered. What he tried to explain to his friends as he went along with them was that his suffering was a preface to his glory. In the words of the story in modern English he asked, "Was it not inevitable that the Christ should suffer and then enter into his glory?" And I ask you, from your knowledge of human life, is there any other way to enter into glory? Do you know any other way that people come to the great realization of life? Do you know any easy, smooth way by which people make the great achievements? It is difficult and dangerous to look back and analyze the lives and accomplishments of other people, but one can't help being tempted by questions like these: What would have happened to the Beethoven symphonies if Beethoven had never been deaf? Where would *Paradise Lost* have been if Milton had not been blind? What would have happened to the leadership of the country in the 1860s if Lincoln hadn't had to go through a period of melancholia? These things, you see, go together—suffering and creation.

The consideration of this fact doesn't make it easier for you to bear your suffering in one sense, and yet I think if you will remind yourself from time to time when the disappointments and the suffering of life come to you that disappointment is often the prelude to discovery and suffering is often and almost always a preface to glory, you will find

you are able to handle them more cre-ely than you otherwise might.

ACTION AND WORDS

nother lesson: action speaks louder than ds. The two friends finally recognized s, not by anything he said, but by what id. It was when he broke the bread and it to them that they knew him. And it always been so. Surely no one would un-stimate the power and beauty of the gs he said, but it wasn't what he said so h that touched the inner life of men; it what he did. It wasn't the fact that he d eloquently about the forgiveness of enemies that reached people; it was the that he did it. It wasn't so much that he d in wonderful words, and told wonder-stories to illustrate what he said, about ling with all sorts and kinds of people; s the fact that he was a friend of publi- and sinners. He didn't talk so much t sacrifice; he gave his life for the life e world.

e reveal ourselves, it is worth reminding elves — it is not a very pleasant remind-ither — but we reveal ourselves not so h by what we say but by what we do. A nt doesn't reveal himself to his child by t he tells him, but by what the child sees do. A preacher, a minister, a leader of a rregation can speak to the people and do best that he can to tell them the things of God, but he doesn't really tell them so much about the love of God by what he says as by what they see him do. And that brings us to our knees, doesn't it? That is where we ought to be once in a while. When you realize that words and eloquence, and all that we can say by way of profession and promise and guarantee, and words to the public and words to the people in private, allowing for all the good that they do, are nothing unless they are confirmed by action. You realize how far you have still to go. In the long run we reveal the people we are by what we do.

Greater than all these lessons is the lesson that love never faileth. I shall not say any more about it because there is no way to analyze it. The only time that I ever heard the great Robert Norwood preach was once when he preached in Grace Church, New York, on this very same story of the Walk to Emmaus. He didn't preach anything like the way I do, that is, in outline form; you couldn't remember what he said after he had said it no matter how hard you tried, but he drew you into an atmosphere, he created a mood, and he said one thing that I'll never forget, "It is the lovers of the world who understand this story." It is the people for whom the relationships in life are the greatest things, and who have the experience that over and above all the changes and chances of life, this thing that we call the love between people remains. "And Jesus himself drew near and went with them."

OOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

Continued from page 2

nities and the constructional devices of sermon. The stimulus of this book will en the thought and brighten the minis-f all readers. (Harper, 104 pp., $2)

splendid addition to the "Rediscovery" s is George Laird Hunt's *Rediscovering hurch*, an engaging story of the church ommunity and the church in the com-ty. Comprehensive in nature, the book s back to the origins and forward to the mpleted work of the church. Chapters on Holy Spirit and the church and on the ments are particularly to be commend-Association, 178 pp., $3)

he pen of Georgia Harkness always re-s wide talents and a keenly sensitive l. She has enriched the literature of the ch through poems and prayers, medita-s and expositions. Her interpretations he Bible and theology have guided both nts and scholars. *Foundations of Christ-ian Knowledge*, her most recent volume, is an examination of the sources of our faith and certainty. Her consideration of the sources of Christian knowledge, revelation, the Bible, Inner Light and the Christian Community—makes theology both pertinent and exciting. (Abingdon, 160 pp., $2.75)

Soldiers Without Swords by Herbert A. Wisbey, Jr., is a history of the Salvation Army in America, the first record of this movement, its meaning and mission, its personalities and achievements. This readable record is important to all church leaders for its understanding of the Army and of the church's ministry to those in need. (Macmillan, 242 pp., $4)

The Dead Sea Scrolls by Millar Burrows tells of the discovery, dating attempts, contents and significance of the most important archeological finds of our time. Written with authority, this volume will serve the minister and Christian layman more satisfactorily than any of the popular writings

on the subject. The book includes translations and interpretations, and relates the discovery to historical Christianity. It is difficult to imagine that any pastor will wish to neglect the reading of this book. (Viking, 435 pp., $6.50)

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WORTH QUOTING

Continued from page 2

smile, a ready handshake, a jolly pat on the back, an exuding self-confidence. This was personality, the "front" that hides inner uneasiness and that can be used for craftiness and guile. Remember also, in *Pygmalion*, the girl rescued from the gutter who acquired a new "personality" when she was taught correct speech and fine manners, but who knew this did not change her real nature . . .

No one knows himself. We are mysteries to ourselves, and even the person we are most intimate with has hidden reserves that are closed to us. Personality cannot be discovered by standing before an X-ray machine and seeing the skelton that is ourselves when flesh and flabbiness are penetrated.

But when we know the "personality" of God, as he is disclosed in his Word, we know our real natures, both as he intended them to be and as they are.

George Laird Hunt in *Rediscovering the Church* (Association)

* * * *

The laws of God are now planted in the minds of men and etched on their hearts. For one has come who had God's laws in his heart and obeyed them perfectly; and he calls us to be like him. No longer are God's commands something foreign and alien to us. They are part of our natural being, part of the new nature that Christ gives us. We know what they are. We do not become good by obeying them; we obey them because we are Christ's. The new society has arrived: the church is the fellowship of engraven hearts.

George Laird Hunt

* * * *

The message of the Psalms is centered in the great truths of religious faith: God, man, sin and salvation. These truths are not presented in closely reasoned logical argument —for which the average mortal is thankful. They come on the wings of song, to the cadence of great music. They burst out with a flood of luminous insight. They shout for a hearing with the driving intensity of great passion. The Psalms are like a skillful surgeon who, having gone through the skin, tissue, and bone of external events, finally lays bare the heart of religious experience itself.

Harold A. Bosley in *Sermons on the Psalms* (Harper)

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For most Christian people heaven would be an empty and thankless boon without the possibility of recognition. Dr. J. D. Jones of Bournemouth, England, tells of a noted American preacher who in the midst of a sermon on the possibility of recognition in the hereafter suddenly cried: "What would heaven be to me without my Willie?" The spontaneous cry of a grieving father finds an echo in the heart of each one of us, even though we should each wish to mention another equally dear name.

This desire for recognition may indeed be an instinctual longing, but it is a longing that expresses an undying hope which God has implanted in our spirits. The longing is itself prophetic of a soul-satisfying response. Seldom has this been stated more tenderly than in the lines placed on Charles Kingsley's tombstone by his widow: *Amavimus, Amamus, Amabimus*—"We have loved, we do love, we shall love." Love will reign in heaven even as it blesses earth.

John Sutherland Bonnell in *Heaven and Hell* (Abingdon)

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The late H. G. Wells was one of the most gifted men of his generation: brilliant mind, tireless student, keen prophet and an excellent writer. But there was a puzzling despair and doubt hovering over all that he wrote. The longer he lived the gloomier he became until, in his last public interview, he gave up the cause of civilization as hopeless. Wells gives us the clue to his morbid outlook in this autobiographical note, "There was a time when my little soul shone and was uplifted at the starry enigma of the sky. That has gone absolutely. Now I can go out and look at the stars as I look at the pattern of wallpaper on a railway station waiting room."

What a falling off that is from the Psalmist's awed cry, "The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork." John Ruskin was right when he hurled this challenge at a generation that thought the meaning of life could be found in the accumulation of wealth, "I would sooner live in a cottage and wonder at everything, than live in Warwick Castle and wonder at nothing."

Harold A. Bosley in *Sermons on the Psalms* (Harper)

heaf of Illustrations

e following illustrations are from *kers' Illustrations for Special Days*, edit- y Charles L. Wallis and published this h by the Abingdon Press. The book con- 1001 illustrations which are arranged nologically according to twenty-four al days and seasons in the church year. ng the occasions featured are Lent and er, Festival of the Christian Home, ecost, Mission Day, Commencement, d-Wide Communion and Thanksgiving Autographed copies may be secured for 0 postpaid from PULPIT PREACHING, 2088, Jackson, Mississippi.

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takes confidence to beget confidence, be- to establish belief, faith to kindle faith. an selling bulletproof vests can deluge a e department with illustrated brochures ing the merits of his product. He can long and learned talks about its effec- ess. All of that means very little until s willing to go out to the pistol range, it on, and say, "Go ahead, shoot!" It s such utter belief in Jesus Christ to ey belief. We cannot expect to do much rd encouraging anyone else to put his into the keeping of Jesus Christ until we do.

—Everett W. Palmer

* * * *

rist helps us to keep our balance and control by high thinking. When one is bing a mountain cliff, it is better to look ather than down. When I stand at the of Niagara Falls and let my eye follow ine of the falling water, I feel a tendency rip the rail to steady myself. But one on a flight from Detroit to New York pilot carried us over that mighty cata- As we swept over it and then circled again, I felt no dizziness. We were high gh to be cut off from the spell which ns on me when I stand at the edge of falls. Similarly Christ gets our minds up the altitude of high thought and high s where we do not feel the downward of the vicious and the vulgar.

—Ralph W. Sockman

* * * *

ne evening I watched a young man move teriously from one side of a car to anoth- On closer examination it appeared that as removing some very large and shiny caps. When he noticed me, he explained, st got these new hub caps, and I don't d to have them stolen." He placed the caps in his car, locked the car door, and then went on his way. In my mind I could imagine that, each time he left his car, he took time to replace the hub caps. What a ritual! Yet for how many of us life has be- come little more than the protection of chrome.

—R. A. Panzer

* * * *

John Wanamaker, noted merchant and liberal Christian giver, made a trip to China to determine how well the moneys he had given for missions were being used. He came upon an old man plowing with a crude instrument that was being drawn by an ox and a young man hitched together. Wana- maker was surprised and asked for an ex- planation. The old man told how a chapel was being built in the village and how it needed a spire that would be visible for miles about. The members of the mission had pray- ed and had given all that they could, but it had not been enough. The old man's son had suggested to the father: "Let us give one of our two oxen. I will take the yoke of the ox we sell." Wanamaker said that when he heard that story, he immediately offered up a silent prayer, "Lord, let me be hitched to a plow, so that I may know the joy of such sacrificial giving."

* * * *

A man who had arrived by train in a strange city late one night found no trans- portation to the hotel. En route he met a policeman who cautioned him that holdups were not uncommon along the poorly lighted streets. "Always keep a margin between yourself and dark alleys and shadowed en- trances to buildings," the policeman suggest- ed. That is sensible advice for all life. Allow- ing a margin of safety between one's self and the dangers of evil offers protection to those who are following Christ.

—Stuart R. Oglesby

* * * *

The Dutch painter Hans Van Meegeren made a fortune by signing his pictures with the names of such eminent masters as Ver- meer and de Hooch. His forgeries fooled even experienced art dealers. One day, however, his pictures were hung in a gallery along with those by the masters. Then the forgeries became obvious. Those who halfheartedly profess Christianity may fool even their closest friends, but their inadequate witness will not prove adequate when compared with genuine Christian living.

—J. Calvert Cariss

R. LOFTON HUDSON
J. R. BROKHOFF
HERBERT BOOTH SMITH
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The Mystery of Death

R. LOFTON HUDSON, Wornall Road Baptist Church, Kansas City, Missouri

O death, where is thy sting. I Corinthians 15:55.

There is hardly any subject from which our minds flinch as much as the subject of death. It is a complete mystery. We simply cannot get our minds around it.

A little four year old girl came in from the back yard holding up a dead bird by one leg.

"Mommy, what is this?" she asked with obvious concern.

"Why that's a bird, Barbara," her mother replied.

"What's wrong with it?"

"It's dead, honey; put it in the garbage can."

"What is *dead,* Mommy?"

"It means that the bird is not alive, it cannot fly or sing anymore. It has been killed by something or other," she said as she glanced up from her work.

"But I don't understand, Mommy, why did it have to die?" Barbara was almost in tears now: she loved birds.

"Everything has to die, dear. It is the way things are. Death follows life. All things in existence now will some day die."

There was a long pause. Then Barbara blurted out, "You mean we will die too?"

"Sure," said her mother. "I will die. You will die. Everybody will die sometime."

There was another pause. "Aw, shucks," said Barbara and darted back out into the yard to drop the dead bird in the garbage can. And to become a philosopher.

When this mother first told me this story I tried to remember when I first learned of death. And I could not recall. But knowing now of what I do about human beings I am sure that I learned the sad fact of death. At my mother's funeral a friend of the family, perhaps a relative, told me that he remembered the funeral of my grandmother. I was three then. He said that my mother lifted me up to take a last look at my grandmother's face. He remembers hearing her say, "Look at her, honey; this is the last time you will see her."

I do not recall this, however. I suppose that these thoughts of death were too tough for my tender mind. And I am sure, also, that if my mother said that I would never see my grandmother again that she expressed only the grief that she felt rather than her deep faith in the life hereafter.

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

Death is a mystery. Even though I am a minister and have read some of the great philosophers on death, I must confess that there is much about death that is a mystery to me. I do not know how the soul and the body are conjoined. I do not know what happens when a human being dies. I do not know how a soul is transported to its real home, with God. And I do not know much about the existence of the human personality after death. As Reinhold Niebuhr has said, "It is unwise for Christians to claim any knowledge of either the furniture of heaven or the temperature of hell."

Man's ignorance of death causes him to fear the worst, to fear extinction, or even torture after we breathe our last breath. This is depicted in Poe's "The Conqueror Worm," in Omar Khayyam's "Rubaiyat," and a hundred other poems. But no one has expressed it with such pessimistic horror as Shakespeare, in *Measure for Measure*:

> Ay, but to die, and to go we know not where;
> To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;
> This sensible warm motion to become
> A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
> To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
> In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;
> To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,
> And blown with restless violence round about
> The pendant world; or to be worse than worst
> Of those that lawless and uncertain thoughts
> Imagine howling: 'tis too horrible!
> The weariest and most loathed worldly life
> That age, ache, penury and imprisonment

Can lay on nature is a paradise
To what we fear of death.

t why should we fear death? Is it really
sum total of all worldly misfortunes?"
crates, as quoted by Plato, said: "For
ear of death, my friends, is only another
of appearing wise when we are foolish
of seeming to know what we know not.
nortal knoweth whether it be not the
test of all good things to man, yet do men
it as if knowing it to be the greatest
ils. And is not this that most culpable
rance which pretends to know what it
s not." This *Apology of Socrates*, one
e world's great masterpieces of litera-
is from the lips of a man who was a-
to be condemned to death for doing
he thought to be right.
t the Bible is equally frank. It does not
k of "passing" or of death being "only a
n" or an allusion. It uses the hard,
h word, "death." Again and again it
ds that men died. It says that "it is ap-
ted unto man once to die and after that
udgment."
sten to its realism:

As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children (Psalm 103:15-17).

nd again in the New Testament:

Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted; But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways (James 1:9-11).

Go now, ye that say, To day or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that (James 4:13-15).

STING OF DEATH

That is why I have chosen as a text, "O death, where is thy sting." The word "sting" is the same word that is used for ox goad in Acts 9:5. It is the word for spear or sharp instrument used to hurt or kill another person. Paul is asking what it is that makes death so painful for us. Why do we shun it so strenuously? When we feel the fog in our throats, the mist in our faces, and the snows begin, and the blasts denote that we are nearing the place, why is there such blunting of emotions, or such pretense of bravery?

Is it that

> the dread of something after death,
> The undiscovered country from whose bourn
> No traveler returns, puzzles the will,
> And makes us rather bear those ills we have
> Than fly to others that we know not of?

I should like to make plain that I am not concerned primarily with the act of dying. There are really very few people, in this day of sedatives, who experience any act of dying. The act is easy. It is the fact that each of us must deal with "taxes and death" for himself that "makes calamity of so long life."

Your individual reaction may be one of fear or apathy or even denial of the fact of death. Many people have an abnormal fear of death because of some very disturbing event in their childhood. Others have converted their hostility into fear. If you have a special fear of death, are horrified over the idea, perhaps you need to talk this out with someone who knows how to deal with abnormal fears. Sermons are not for this purpose.

What I am concerned with is the sting of death that every normal person feels. Paul says that "the sting of death is sin." What does he mean? The relation between sin and death is a necessary one for the natural man, the man "without hope and without God in the world." Sin is man's revolt or rebellion against God. It separates from God. It is broken fellowship, just as faith is meeting God on God's terms. Death is separation also. We are separated from our loved ones, from our fleshly bodies, and we know not what else. It is an irreversible ending of this life. Man shares that with the animals and with plant life.

But man differs from the animals. He alone anticipates death. He is the only being that is a person, the only one who says, "I must die." Everything he does is "oriented

towards death." This fact, alongside his sense of responsibility, makes him know that something more may lie in the cup of human woe. It is fear of punishment, or aloneness, or rejection, that is the sting of death. We are all guilty sinners and deserve rejection or punishment. This is why Charles Kean says that "the fear of death is at the root of man's anxiety." He seeks security, status, and achievement. He seeks fulfillment as a person. Death cuts all of these short.

CONCEALMENT OR EVASION

Man has tried through the ages to deal with this problem by concealment or evasion.

He has tried to tell himself that he will cease to exist at death. But as Dr. Karl Menninger has pointed out: "What is 'death.' Surely not mere biological cessation, for no human being can, in the deepest core of his nature, conceive of nonexistence or imagine its occuring to him." It was Thomas Huxley, the scientist who said, "When I think that in 1900 I shall know no more nor be no more than in 1800, it comes over me with a horror which I cannot express. The fact is that rather than cease to be I had rather be in hell, if I could have a place where the climate and company are not too trying."

Others try to avoid the painful thought of death by faith in a sort of immortality. This is the ancient Greek method. For that matter, the method of several great cultures. The Indian doctrine of Karma, about the incarnation of the soul, is an attempt to avoid death, yet retain the idea of punishment and purification. It would be hard to imagine a more horrible doctrine of survival, human nature being what it is! It is based upon the concept that punishment purifies, whereas Christianity is based upon the fact that forgiveness and love purifies. Only God knows which is correct.

Christ stands before death with the only answer that meets death head on and does not wince.

He admits the fact that history does come to an end. "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." He would condemn Plato's doctrine of timelessness as an idealistic evasion of the fact that we are in God's hands and must stand before God. We live under God and therefore must be responsible. Evading death by some vague theory of immortality is a revolt against the Creator.

The reincarnation theory is a compromise with our conscience to avoid coming to God for forgiveness. Besides, it is pure fiction. The only one who has ever returned from that "undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns" was Jesus Christ. He has a right to know. But if we are trying to save ourselves, if we hate the very word "salvation," as all men do naturally, we will believe a fiction which says that we must save ourselves by a series of reincarnations by which we may reach Nirvana.

CHRISTIAN MESSAGE

What, then, is the Christian message concerning death?

First, Christ confronts man who is oriented towards death, man who is faced with the impenetrable mystery of death, with *life*. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." The believer "shall never perish" because he has eternal life abiding in him. He has passed from death unto life.

It was Jesus Christ himself who "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." There is no eternal life for lost men. They exist eternally but do not live. To exist is not the same as to live, not even in this life. If a man lives without God in this world he not only experiences death (is dead in trespasses and sins, but he will enter the second death. Apparently the second death means final and irrevocable separation from God.

Since the primary meaning of death is separation, God's answer to death is fellowship with God. God is with us while we live on this earth and we go to live in his presence when the body dies. This takes the sting out of death. This causes death to be swallowed up of victory. Death is destroyed. Death dies.

Jesus had this same idea in mind when he stood at the grave of Lazarus. "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, thought he were dead, yet shall live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." The Power which brings about physical resurrection is the same as that which gives us new life when we become Christians. And those who are alive when Christ returns will never have to experience physical death. This is what Jesus meant in this passage. Only those who know Christ in sincerity, in the Christian experience of salvation and sanctification, will be assured of this power and have the sting of death removed.

It is no wonder that Paul, when speaking of the sting of death, said: "Thanks be to

God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

FELLOWSHIP

The second remedy for the sting of death is *fellowship*. It is fellowship with God in this life, to which I have already referred.

Men are prone to speak of death as a leap in the dark, as the final curtain that falls on the drama of life. But there is no leap in the dark for those who have walked in the light. And the curtain is simply to the last act of this life. A new drama on a new stage with richer and deeper meanings. The Christian conviction is that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

It has been said that literature and death are two things men have to go through alone. But the Christian is never alone, not even in death. This is the meaning of Jesus' statement that Lazarus was "carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." We are never alone. That is what Jesus was trying to get across to his disciples.

It is also the message of Paul.

> Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquers through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor death, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-39).

One of the astounding statements in the Bible, about death, is in the Letter to the Philippians: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." How could any human being say that to die is better than to live?

He could not have said "to die is gain" unless he had first honestly said that "for me to live is Christ." He had a "desire to depart and be with Christ," he said. This was "far better" than living in a broken body and in a very frustrating world. In reality, this was not a death-wish, in the sense that a suicide wishes to die. It was a normal facing of the facts by one who had had fellowship with Christ that was so close that death had lost its sting.

Paul thought of death as "absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." No doubt it reflected the promise of Christ that "where I am, there ye may be also."

An aged man was faced with the fact that he would soon die. His doctor had told him that he would do well to last twenty-four hours. "Shall I call a minister for you?" the doctor asked. "Why no, Doctor," the man said, "why bother a minister? They are busy. Besides, I have been a Christian for fifty-three years. It has meant a great deal to me. I believe in God and His promises. I am not afraid to die. His grace has been sufficient for me in life; it will be sufficient in death."

Put alongside this the statements of D. H. Lawrence in *The Man Who Died*, "It was fear, the ultimate fear of death, that made men mad . . . For men and women alike are mad with the egoistic fear of their own nothingness." This is the way a pagan feels about death. They sigh because they have to leave "this big interesting world," and their loved ones. The Christian knows that God, who made this world, has other worlds more interesting, and a fellowship more meaningful.

Lord Balfour as he closed his eyes in death, whispered, "This is going to be a great experience." The mystery is going to be a great experience. The mystery is not entirely removed, but the companionship is certain. To be with Christ is enough.

RESURRECTION

Finally, Christ promised the *resurrection*.

This marvelous fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians shows what the Christian concept of the resurrection is. It does not claim that these same bodies will be raised from the graves. Paul likens it to a grain of wheat. A dull, brown seed is placed in the ground. It grows up a tender, new, stalk pointing its way toward the sun. But it is a wheat stalk. It retains its identity.

Any honest person knows that this teaching about the resurrection is uncanny. We cannot understand it. But the stalk of wheat coming from the grain of wheat is uncanny also. But it happens every year.

Jesus came to bring these things to light. Otherwise we would be in darkness concerning the life hereafter. Death would be utterly humiliating, as it is to most people. As Sir Thomas Browne said, "I am not so much afraid of death as ashamed of it."

The Christian doctrine of resurrection does not teach that the soul sleeps in the

grave until the resurrection. This is crude as well as untrue. Nor does it say that these physical bodies will be raised as they were buried, pock marks, broken bones, and all.

It does say that "God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to each seed his own body." We are to have bodies like his resurrected body. We are still utterly dependent upon God. We walk by faith, not by sight. Some people, rather than admit their own limited knowledge, had rather bolster their offended egos with reasons for believing in a vague sort of immortality.

Christ assured us that we will retain our own identity. This is the primary meaning of the resurrection. God made us for better things than to be eaten of worms. We are to be eternally with Him. The Holy Spirit in us is the pledge that the human spirit will ultimately be with Him. "Whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

WORD OF CHRIST

This makes such remarks as "heaven is a state of mind," and "death is merely an illusion," or "we will be reincarnated on this earth" as entirely untrue, if not utterly ridiculous. Death is real. It is sometimes painful. The aging process is working in us every minute of our lives. And to avoid thoughts of death, by erecting our own system of assurance is but another attempt on man's part to save himself. It can't be done. God forces us to walk in faith or to stumble in darkness.

A friend of mine sat in my study and said, "I believe that when we die we evaporate in the thin air like smoke." As he spoke he raised his hand in a spiral fashion, like smoke curling toward heaven. My reply was, "Give me one bit of evidence that this is true." He had none.

I prefer to take the word of Jesus Christ who said: "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." I trust Him in death because I have found Him so true in life.

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" the Bible says. John Donne, the seventeenth century poet, sets this forth clearly in what to me is the greatest poem on death in the English language. This sonnet is one of the few thoroughly Christian poems ever written.

> Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
> Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
> For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
> Die not, poor Death; nor yet canst thou kill me.
> From rest and sleep, which but thy picture be,
> Much pleasure, then from thee much more must flow;
> And soonest our best men with thee do go—
> Rest of their bones and souls' delivery!
> Thou'rt slave to Fate, chance, kings and desperate men,
> And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell,
> And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well,
> And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?
> One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
> And death shall be no more: Death, thou shalt die!"

Are You Going to Heaven?

J. R. BROKHOFF, St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Charlotte, N. C.

Today thou shalt be with me in paradise. Luke 23:43.

It is commonly said that the two most certain things in life are death and taxes. Of the two, death is the more certain. Everyone of us knows that death is inevitable, that it is as normal and natural as birth. The fact of death poses a problem for us, where shall we spend eternity? Jesus taught that eternity is divided into heaven and hell. Which shall it be for us? According to a recent poll, 88 per cent of Americans think they are going to heaven. In fact, 58 per cent do not really believe there is a hell. It is quite possible that many Americans, thinking they are going to heaven, are going to be surprised some day when they find themselves in hell. The thief on the cross was sure he was going to heaven because Jesus told him, "Today thou shalt be with me in paradise." Has Jesus ever said that to you? Are you so confident of going to heaven that you could say with conviction, "I am going to heaven?"

Before answering that question, we must

face another. Are we sure that we want to go to the Christian heaven? We, of course, know that every person and people have their own ideas of what heaven is. The American Indian believed he would go to the Happy Hunting Ground when he died. He could see himself in beautiful forests filled with game and animals. Is that the kind of heaven you would be interested in? You perhaps do not know how to hold a gun, let alone shoot it. You would not want to go to that kind of a heaven.

Woud you be interested in the Moslem heaven? The faithful Moslem is promised a sensual heaven where each man will have thousands of pretty maids, rivers of wine, and lots of singing. If you love your wife and believe in high ideals of womanhood, would you be interested in spending an eternity in such debauchery? If you would not care for either of these heaven, perhaps you will not be interested in the Christian heaven. What is it?

It can be said that the Christian heaven is a place or state of love. The people in heaven are unselfish, kind, loving, thoughtful, and considerate of each other. Everyone loves each other. Each tries to help and serve the other. There is a legend concerning a man who visited hell. He saw the inhabitants seated before a large banquet table laden with the best foods. But they were not eating, for they had spoons with long handles tied to their arms prohibiting their feeding themselves. They could not bend their elbows. The visitor turned to the guide and said, "How come? That's terrible!" "Well," the guide replied, "that's the hell of it!" Then the man went to heaven and found the same type of table with food. The people were at the feast and had similar spoons tied to their arms. But he saw they were happily eating the delicious food because each man with straightened arm fed his neighbor. That is heaven. Each in consideration of the needs of the other serves his neighbor, but hell is where each man selfishly is for himself.

CHRISTIAN VIEW

It may be that you are not interested in going to a place of love. You like to be self-centered and mean, always looking out for "Number 1." There are some people you despise, and you do not want to love all men, especially your enemies. You may be intensely prejudiced and refuse to associate with other races, but in the Christian heaven all races will be present. There will be no segregation in heaven, for all God's people are His children. On the other hand, you may be constitutionally unable to love anyone. That, it is said, was true of men like Napoleon and Ataturk, the Washington of modern Turkey. Each man died without a friend, because he could not love any single person. To put a man like that in the Christian heaven of love would be hell.

Heaven according to the Christian view is a place or state of life. Life implies activity and growth. Heaven is not so much a place of golden streets, but it must be blanketed with an ever-green carpet of growing grass. The trees are not bare but have growing, green leaves. The gardens are yielding flowers and vegetables. All is growing, achieving, striving toward worthwhile goals.

Once there was a man who died and he went to a place he thought was heaven. He had no work to do. Every need was satisfied. He was waited on hand and foot. At first, he enjoyed his sedate, quiet life, but it was not too long before he became restless. He wanted to do something. Finally he called the man in charge and asked if there was something he might do. He was told there was not a thing to accomplish. All he had to do was sit and rest. The man cried, "This is terrible! I wish I had gone to hell." The official asked, "And where do you think you are?" For those who are alive and growing, a place of do-nothing is hell. Hell is still and stagnant, but heaven is climbing mountains, crossing bridges, striving for lofty goals, yearning for better things, seeking clearer vision, and scaling the heights of love and service.

Have you been thinking of heaven as a place of stillness and perfect rest? Then you will not interested in going to the Christian heaven. You may be like the man who thought heaven was just a place where harps were played and choirs sang. He said he could not play a harp and since he had no voice, he was clear of the singing. Then, he joyously said, "Don't mourn for me now, don't mourn for me ever, for 'm going to do nothing forever and ever." This man never arrived at heaven. Those in God's presence go from strength to strength. They grow in grace. They improve in character. Their vision of Christ becomes clearer. They are ever growing, working serving, and living.

WHERE CHRIST IS

Heaven, moreover, is a place or condition where Christ is. Jesus said he was going to prepare a place for us that where he is there we may be also. Paul had this understanding of the nature of heaven. He wrote, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain." It

was gain because it meant being with Christ. He continued, "To be present in the body is to be absent from the Lord." He was anxious to die, to slough off the material body, that he could go to the spiritual realm of Christ.

This will not appeal to the non-Christian or the inactive Christian. They do not desire Christ's presence here on earth. Why should they want to be with Him in heaven? They do not worship Him. They do not obey His word, serve in His Kingdom, or testify of His love. They do not know Him, nor do they seemingly care if they love Him or not.

For some Christ is an uncomfortable person, and to be in His presence would be anything but relaxing. Have you ever had the experience of being in the presence of one whom you knew was better than you? You respected the person and admired his ability, but when you left him you sighed deeply and said to yourself, "Now I can be myself again." That is the way some may feel about Jesus. He is so pure and perfect in contrast to the smallness of our souls. We would be more comfortable in the fellowship of common sinners than in the presence of the Perfect.

Christ may be too demanding for some and they would never be happy in heaven. Christ is demanding. He asks for our whole hearts and everything we have. Some object to that. They want to love their friends, but Jesus asks them to love their enemies. That is too much! They like to hold grudges and get even, but Jesus teaches forgiveness. That is weakness! Jesus calls for a man to dedicate his entire substance to the Kingdom, but those who cannot even tithe walk away in disgust. Christ is too expensive!

If Christ is in heaven, then only Christians will be looking forward to it. There could be nothing finer than the pleasure of Christ's presence. Through the years we have talked with Him in prayer, adored Him in worship, read His words in the Bible, and tried our best to serve Him in His church. Now we get to see Him and to be with Him personally. That, for the Christian, is heaven.

Now we can come back to the original question, are you going to heaven, to this kind of heaven? Assuming that you do want this type of heaven, are you sure of going there? What comfort and peace would come to us if we were sure! There would be no more fear nor terror associated with death. It would mean the beginning of something greater than life on earth. With Bach, we could then say, "Come, sweet death."

CHURCH TRIUMPHANT

You and I can be certain about going to heaven. As a Christian, I can say that I am going to heaven because I am an active member of the church. Does this mean that church membership in itself saves one and guarantees entrance to heaven? No, not church membership in itself, but only in what church membership implies. To be a member of the church means to unite with the society of the saved. It encloses the group of the redeemed. Over the front door of a church might well be carved the words, "This is the gate of heaven." The body of Christians is a colony of heaven on earth. When a man joins the church, he is baptized. This act is God's gracious adoption of a sinner as a child, and makes him a member of the Kingdom of Heaven. If he retains the original faith, and re-establishes his union with Christ by faithful reception of the Lord's Supper, he keeps his membership in the colony of heaven.

You see, the church is of two parts, the militant and the triumphant church. A man cannot get into the church triumphant without dying in the church militant on earth. The architecture of the church symbolizes this fact. The nave represents the church militant, and the chancel stands for the church triumphant. When a Christian dies, he walks from the nave into the chancel. Death is nothing more than walking up the steps leading to the chancel and going to the altar of God. Death means going higher and closer to God.

You can figure out for yourself whether or not you are going to heaven. Are you taking an active part in the work of His church? If so, death will be nothing but a transfer from one part of the church to another.

I can be sure of heaven because, in the second place, I walk with God daily. Those who walk with God during their earthly life continue to walk with Him after life. This was true with Enoch who, it was said, walked with God, and then at the end of life "Enoch was not for God took him." The same happened to Elijah, the fiery prophet. He lived and fought for God throughout life, and when death came, God swooped down from heaven in a fiery chariot to take Elijah up to Him.

If a man walks with God daily, he need not worry about God's leaving Him at death. God is faithful and will never desert us. We put our hands in His great hand and walk with Him through life. Then comes the time when we walk through a valley where it is

somewhat dark, "the valley of the shadow of death." He holds our hand tighter as we walk through the valley, but it is not long before we come out to a plain where the sun shines and all things are lovely. This is because, as St. Paul said, nothing can separate us from the love of God, no powers, nothing present or future, not life nor death — absolutely nothing can separate us from God's love.

HEAVEN NOW

The greatest assurance of heaven is that a Christian can say, "I am in heaven now." By faith in Him, Christ has offered me paradise just as He did to the thief on the cross. How do I know that? Because Christ lives in me now by faith, and where He is heaven is. I feel the joy of salvation. My conscience is clear. Peace has seized my soul. I am happy and contented in His presence and doing His work. Heaven, you see, begins now, the very moment Christ is taken into the heart. If heaven does not begin here and now, it will never begin at death.

Heaven experienced now, to be sure, is not heaven in its entirety. Bishop Berggrav, primate of the Norwegian church, once addressed an international youth gathering in Oslo. He pointed to the false ceiling of the cathedral and called attention to the oppressive atmosphere it created. Then he explained the reason for the ceiling. It was put there eleven years before to serve as a floor for the painter who was painting the true ceiling. In a year it was to be removed, and then the worshippers would see the most convincing sermon an artist could paint of God's love. That is so much like heaven here and later. We have a touch of heaven now. We see through a glass darkly. We know in part but in heaven we shall know even as we are known. The joys of believing and working for Christ now cannot compare with the unspeakable joys to be experienced later. The low, false ceiling will be removed, and we shall see all the glory and beauty of God in heaven.

Dying, then, will be life's richest experience. It means a reunion with our loved ones who died in Christ. What a homecoming that will be! An even greater joy will be the welcome given by Christ. H. C. Morrision went to Africa and served there many years as a missionary. On his return, he happened to be on the same ship with Teddy Roosevelt who was coming back from a big game hunt. As the ship pulled into New York, the ship, because of Roosevelt, was welcomed with whistles and streams of water. The mayor of New York came to give a speech of welcome. Morrison was despondent and thought: "Here I am all alone. Nobody is here to welcome me and I have been preaching the gospel for years. Yet a man who goes to Africa for a few weeks to hunt is given an enthusiastic ovation upon his return." Suddenly he realized, "Why should I be worried? I am not home yet." He could see his entry into heaven. Christ stepped closer to him and with open arms said, "Henry, welcome home. We've been waiting for you a long time."

Life's richest experience is when death comes to open the doors of a fuller heaven. Christ and His people are there to welcome us to a life of peace and joy that has no ending.

Christian Faith and Bereavement

HERBERT BOOTH SMITH, North Presbyterian Church, Denver, Colorado

And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter . . . And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palms: and they encamped there by the waters. *Exodus* 15:23, 27.

One good woman is reported to have said that she found a time-table fully as interesting as a city directory. Probably so; but here we find religion in a time-table. If anyone says that there is no time-table in the Scripture, remind him of the journey of the Children of Israel to the Promised Land and point out to him some of the way-stations. Many of them are in small type; but our two today are in large print.

Let us note that this trip of God's children was no ordinary journey. It was not an idle sight-seeing tour, but a personally conducted tour which was in the providence of God to save a nation.

Usually in the case of special tours, some official of the railway company arranges in advance every detail, so that all possible discomforts of travel are eliminated. In the case before us, the Great Conductor whom we call God was leading His people out of the Egypt of bondage to the Canaan of freedom, a land flowing with milk and honey. Hence it would

have been supposed that the pathway of the caravan would be a boulevard paved by the loving-kindness of the Director, with no detours of affliction, and having convenient stopping places all along the route. Instead we find a very different picture. At the outset of the journey, God had opened up the Red Sea before them; and they probably supposed that all other difficulties would melt melt away before them, as if the world were made for their special benefit. But to their surprise they struck a three day's journey over rugged roads, and had to march thirty-three miles without a drop of water. And thus they began to see that the Exodus wasn't a picnic after all; and repining took the place of rejoicing.

At long last, however, they arrived at an oasis where they had hoped to rest and refresh their tired souls and bodies. But to their great disappointment the waters proved to be bitter, so that they could not drink of them; and hence they called the place "Marah" which means "bitter." Georgraphers tell us that the place today which is called "Huwareh," is thought to be on the site of the Biblical Marah. If so, small wonder the people murmured, for the waters are the worst in the district.

Disappointment and disillusionment were not confined to the ancient children of Israel. The great human race of pilgrim souls often find that the waters they hoped would be so sweet are bitter after all. When the little child learns there is no Santa Claus; when the young college graduate faces the cruel competition of the business world; when the merchant has made his pile and yet finds that all is not gold that glitters; when two people very much in love find that they can't live up in the sky but have to descend to the mud of the commonplace highway; when the new convert finds he is not as happy behind the counter as he was in kneeling at the penitents' bench—in other words, when the air castles vanish we need somewhere to go with our disappointment.

And so, the wise and patient Moses, who was the human leader of the caravan, laid the matter before the Lord. He did what we would do today. He took his pain to headquarters.

There are several different outlines which might guide our thinking. One is: Reality-Remedy-Recovery. Another: Cross-Crucifixion-Crown. A third: Trials-Trees-Triumphs.

But suppose we take the following: I. Bitter waters occur in the path of God's leading. II. The bitter rightly used can become sweet. III. Sanctified trial means glorified life.

I

Thirst is an awful thing. Only those who have experienced its tortures know what it is. It is a remarkable fact that the only cry of physical need which was uttered by our Lord on the cross was the agony of thirst. A soldier wounded in the battle of Leipsic said that the pain of thirst was greater than that of all his wounds put together.

Bearing this in mind, let us picture this large company of men, women and children on their way through the wilderness. God has assured them safe-conduct. They are in the path of duty. They have just experienced a case of Fatherly care in the crossing of the water; and it would be supposed that a God who could divide the Red Sea would be able to furnish ordinary drinking-water. I imagine they asked Moses why he had brought them out into the wilderness to die. No wonder he took the problem to God. And yet see what a lesson it has for us. How plainly it tells us that our disappointment may be God's appointment. There is no promise in the Bible that the Christian's path through life will be a manicured road with all the bumps and jolts taken out.

Let me give you a picture and it is not imaginary either: I am called to a home where the death-angel has entered; and it has gotten there before me. A loved one, who had everything to live for, has been snatched away in the prime of life. The minister must honestly face the questions which will be asked: Why should he have been taken? What have we done to offend the Lord?

It might be well to borrow the family Bible and turn either to the 37th or the 73rd Psalm, for the problem is as old as the human race. It is not new. From the beginning of time people have been troubled by the query why the good suffer. Or read to your friends the story of that sad day on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had told His disciples to make for the shore at Capernaum and so they started out as He commanded. But do they have easy sailing? Not at all. The sea was rough and the winds were blowing the wrong way. If they had turned in their tracks and deserted the Lord's will, they could have avoided the storm. But they kept on; and the account says that He saw them "toiling in rowing." And you remember how He came to them in the midst of their discouragement and turned their defeat into victory.

You see, this is not a Christian world; it is a pagan one very largely; and consequent-

the Christian is pulling against the stream nd the crowd, rather than with them. Listen the old hymn:

Must I be carried to the skies on
flowery beds of ease?
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?
No, I must fight if I would reign. In-
crease my courage Lord.
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain, Sup-
ported by Thy word."

idn't Jesus say: "In the world ye shall ave tribulation; but be of good cheer. I have vercome the world."

Dr. Marvin R. Vincent told us that years go he went down into the Roman Cata-mbs. He hadn't gone five feet from the ntrance when he saw he was hopelessly lost xcept for the cowled monk with the taper head. Passages were opening up on either ide, but his guide knew the way. It might ave reminded him of that verse in the 42nd Psalm in which David said: "When ny spirit is overwhelmed within me, Thou nowest my path." Or as the Christian poet uts it:

"His wisdom ever waketh,
His sight is never dim;
He knows the way He taketh,
And I will walk with Him."

It may help to clarify the situation by re-emembering that there are two kinds of disci-line mentioned in the Bible. One is the type hich is sent to drive a wayward son or aughter into the right way of life. The ther, which is very different, is not punish-ent but education, to build up God's child nto the saintly soul he is meant to be. Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, even s a father the son in whom he delighteth."

Listen to Robert Burdette for a moment n "Why I Believe in Sickness and Trouble": Because I believe in quinine which isn't alf as sweet as sugar, but is a much better urer of fever. Because I don't believe that n athlete can train for a marathon race on diet of ice-cream soda and fudge. Because don't believe that pickle and cake are good nuscle-builders. Because men don't go into rose-garden to look for ship-timber. Be-ause I believe in the old Arab proverb that ll sunshine makes the desert.' Because acob saw a great vision when his head was illowed on a stone in the wilderness. Be-ause people who get everything they want, nd get it easy, usually, die crying for the oon."

II

I have been trying to think of several possible ways to encounter trials and disappointments such as the people met in the text. As far as I can see there are three main ways of doing so. They may be designated: Indignation, Hallucination and Resignation.

Let us look at these in turn, starting with Indignation. A friend of mine in a former pastorate used to announce his Sunday topics in the Saturday paper with this addition: "If I knew anything better than the Gospel, I would preach it." And so let us see today if there is a better method to face the world than that given in our Christian philosophy of life.

When a little child is given a dose of bitter medicine he is likely to struggle and protest, making the experience much worse than would otherwise be the case. He is his own worst enemy, if he only knew it.

It reminds me of the story of the day when Casear, so we are told, gave a great feast for his nobles and friends. The weather was extremely foul and nothing could be done for the honor of the meeting. Whereupon he was so enraged against the gods that he commanded all who had bows to shoot up their arrows at Jupiter, their chief god, as in defiance of the weather. Well, this was done; but the arrows fell short of Jupiter, and instead of wounding heaven, returned upon their own heads, so that many of the marksmen were severely wounded. It is a quaint old tale, but it has its lesson. Our murmurings hit us back, and, instead of harming God, they injure ourselves.

There is a second way which, for lack of a better term, I have called Hallucination. I refer to the philosophy of movements which tell us to deny the evidence of our senses with regard to pain and sorrow, and to say it is all an error of mortal mind. Tell yourself there is no such thing as sin, sickness and sorrow. If a thing tastes bitter to you, tell yourself it is really sweet; it is your sense of taste that is wrong.

Now, what is the logical result of such a scheme of things? It is this: we are living in a world of delusion and cannot believe what our senses tell us. If they seem to think that the sun is shining today, it is an error. It is probably pouring rain. Why should folk who follow such a scheme ever eat or drink or for that matter ever get dressed and go out into the street? The humorous thing to me is that people who claim to follow this teaching are beautifully inconsistent. I note that they wear glasses and use an umbrella when

it rains, and comfort themselves like the rest of us. Hence I do not see logically how I can use one scheme when sorrow comes and a totally different one when joy and success are my lot.

But, thank God, there is still a third way to meet the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. That is Resignation.

Do you remember the days of the horse and buggy travel, in which, if they wanted to take the dog along, a chain or rope would be affixed to his collar and that would be fastened to the rear axle? Well, there were two things Rover could do: one was to pull back and almost refuse to go along. But he finally discovered that he had to go anyhow and he was only making pain for himself by trying to "kick against the pricks." What did our great Exampler say when He came to the supreme trial in Gethsemane? He did not deny the awful bitterness of the cup He had to drink; nor did He call a legion of soldiers to His side. No, He said: "If this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, Thy will be done."

I have read of Josephine Butler's dream. She was passing through the land of Marah, and her soul was sick with bitterness. But she decided to commit her way to the Lord, after which she fell into a peaceful sleep. Here is what she said about it afterwards: "I thought I lay flat, with a restful feeling, on a smooth sea, with no limit or shore. A strong hand held me up, and the light was all around me. I seemed to hear a voice say: 'Such is the grace of God.' " Isn't that a beautiful picture of what the grace of God can do? It must have been some such Christian who sang:

We bless Thee for Thy peace, O God,
Deep as the unfathomed sea,
Which falls like sunshine on the road
Of those who trust in Thee.
O for a life of calm repose,
Amid the world's loud roar.
A life that like a river flows
Along a peaceful shore.

III

It looks as though bitter and sweet often live next door to each other. It all depends which way you are going which one you meet first. As somebody had beautifully said: "Christianity is first an agony, then an anthem." So it was with Jesus: first Good Friday and then Easter Day. First the long discipline of School and then Graduation. Why do they call the end of school Commencement? Well, it's that way with the Christian. He doesn't begin to live until he has died: died unto self and living unto Christ.

It looks as though life were a university course in which we have got to learn the lesson of Marah before we are promoted to Elim. By the time we have drunk the bitter cup we become post-graduates in the school of life.

And so I say to you, dear friend, if you who have borne sorrow: Don't give up and curse God, as Job's wife urged him to do. Don't run home, like the suicide does, before school is out. But seek that help which is from above and you will be able to graduate with honors at the palm trees of Elim, which is another name for heaven.

Strength for the Sorrowful

EDGAR N. JACKSON, Methodist Church, Mamaroneck, New York

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Matthew 5:4.

In this Beatitude we have an illustration of a truth that is held in the tension of a paradox. Sorrow and comfort seem to be opposite extremes. We would not usually think of seeking blessedness or happiness anywhere between the two. Yet Jesus with his wisdom invites us to look carefully at sorrow because within it there are roots of true happiness.

Undoubtedly He was seeking to create within the minds of his listeners an awareness of the universality of sorrow. He did not say that sorrow was good, but He did indicate that it is so much a part of life that we do not really begin to live until we have learned the high art of dealing with it creatively.

Some people are destroyed by sorrow. They let it make of them embittered and disillusioned souls. Some even turn against God in their despair.

But other people are made through sorrow. They gain a new sensitivity, and deep and rich faith. They develop new understanding and more genuine sympathy.

What makes the difference in how sorrow effects life? That is the question we would face. Sorrow is a difficult part of life. It is an important determinant of life. Until we

an handle our sorrows and disappointments ealistically and creatively we will suffer rom unhappiness.

A fort is a place of security in danger. he fact that it is a fort indicates that it was repared because of an awareness of such anger. It is a place of defense and a source f strength under attack. The word comfort oes not suggest a placid state, devoid of tress. Rather it indicates a soul made secure hrough a fortitude that is gained by an oility to build for itself something that is ot shattered by the onslaught of circumance. Mourning then becomes not so much concern for externals as it is an achievement of a quality of living. Mourning in this ense is not unbridled grief, but rather a reative use of sorrow.

CREATIVE SORROW

What can this creative handling of sorrow o for you? Sorrow can bring perspective to ife. Miguel De Unamuno, the Spanish philoopher, has written a book called *The Tragic ense of Life*. In this volume he points out hat an understanding of life's meaning rows out of a realizing of its tragic nature. ust as drama reaches its highest expression n a tragedy, so also life itself achieves its ost sublime expression through coming to rips with tragedy. Thus we have the triumph of Easter in a cosmic drama that canot be separated from the tragedy of Good riday.

How can we know true happiness without basis for contrast? Rembrandt knew the reative use of shadow. His canvases reflect nsight and meaning not because they were aring in their use of color, but rather beause light was used sparingly and in strong ontrast with the shadows from which it merged.

In my days as an amatuer painter I did a ew England winter landscape. It seemed trangely unreal and almost ethereal. I knew omething was lacking, but I did not know hat it was. I invited the criticism of an xperienced artist, and immediately he said, You must have more shadow."

There was a time when I lived in a shalw self-confidence. Then came that day I elive as a part of every other day, when a ttle lad I loved called "Daddy" in his derium, and I was helpless. While I am sure is not God's will that his little ones should uffer, it seems to be equally true of our eak humanity that we must taste of death efore we begin to understand the nature of fe itself. The master critic of life looks at our shallowness and says, "You must have more shadow."

A woman in grief went to Buddha centuries ago pleading for the return of life to her child. Buddha sent her away to collect a bowl full of peppers from families who had known no similar grief. At eventime when she returned he promised to minister to her need. However, when evening came she returned with an empty bowl and a heart filled with new understanding.

UNDERSTANDING AND SYMPATHY

Sorrow can bring new understanding of self and richer sympathy for others. When we seek only comfort we seek the meaningless. There is no knowledge of comfort until we have been uncomfortable. Men even create for themselves conditions of hardship so that they may better know the joys of relief. In a deeper spiritual sense this is eternally true. Sorrow can enrich life through a new sense of perspective. It can give new and far horizons for faith.

Sorrow can bring to life the security that comes from learning to let go of what we cannot and should not cling to. Selfishness is an important ingredient of bereavement. Dr. Paul Tillich in speaking of neurotic grief says, "The inability to have a full encounter with reality makes doubts as well as certitudes unrealistic." It is unrealistic and illusory to cling to a past that cannot be recreated. Such an attitude destroys the present and jeopardizes the future. Creative sorrow knows how to let go of illusions and the unreal because it has found a larger reality into which past experience takes its proper place.

When John Bright was in grief because of the death of his bride of two years a friend came to him and said that as soon as the first effect of his grief was past he wanted his help in working to repeal the oppressive Corn Laws of England. Using his own grief creatively he threw himself heart and soul into a crusade that grew out of his new found sympathy for others who suffered. His name lives gloriously in English history because he had learned well the art of letting go, and using his sorrow creatively for the well being of others.

The inability to let go is rooted in immature emotions. The child clings to things for security even when he does not want them. The adult with immature emotions clings futilely to the illusions of life. He refuses to let go because as yet he has no mature basis for readjusting his need to his ability. Maturity brings the deep inner comfort that

grows with the ability to adjust to reality. Then the inner life remains secure for it is master of external circumstance rather than mastered by them.

PRODUCT OF FAITH

This inner security is a product of faith. It comes from a knowledge of strength beyond the self. One must need it greatly to use it vigorously. As sorrow creates the need it stimulates the growth toward that maturity that is a rich blessings for life. Doubt as the opposite of faith creates unreasoned fear. Dr. Tillich writes, "The anxiety of doubt is much the same as the anxiety of death." The fearful soul dies a thousand deaths. The soul that is rooted in faith never dies. The correlary of Dr. Tillich's statement might well be that "the strength of faith is much the same as the strength of life."

Faith does not operate on the immature premise of seeking what we want in life as much as it tries to make something fine of what life brings to us. It knows the importance of creative adjustment to the circumstances we do not make but must accept. Faith knows that to sorrow is to live, and it refuses to shield its heart through callousness against the claims of love.

Religious faith is far more than an opiate against the sorrow of life. It is an incentive toward more and better experience in living. As a college student I lived in an unheated room in the tower of a college building that was alloted to the student janitor. When taken ill with influenza the wife of one of my professors who knew of my condition sent her car for me and cared for me for ten days in her guest room. Nothing to serve my needs was overlooked, and her radiant personality indicated that she found real joy in this kind service.

One day during convalescence I asked why she did this sort of service to students. Then she told me about Mary, her eighteen year old daughter who had died of pneumonia while in college. Her love for Mary was still finding expression through a loving ministry to dozens of students who had found through her a source of strength and comfort in time of need. Her life was an expression of creative sorrow, for she had faith in life and lived that faith vigorously. She was not defeated by circumstance, for faith is never defeated. Her faith gave her the genuine comfort that made it possible for her to live courageously in the present where life is.

In this rather baffling beatitude Jesus does not commend sorrow. He recognizes that it is inevitable. He points out the importance of learning to handle it creatively. True happiness can only come when the spirit reaches maturity. The experience of sorrow may hasten the spirit's growth to the place where it gains a mature perspective on the incidents of life, a capacity to let go of illusions and hold to spiritual truth, and to know the positive power of a sustaining faith.

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." We might take the liberty to paraphrase it, "Blessed are those who use their sorrow creatively for they shall find a security within that is not shaken by circumstance but rather produces the fruits of enriched sympathy, heightened understanding and deepened faith."